

Public Hearing – February 24, 2022
Energy and Technology Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Katie S. Dykes

Senate Bill No. 92 - AN ACT PERMITTING TEN-YEAR CONTRACTUAL PERIODS FOR THE TRANSPORTATION OF SCHOOL CHILDREN IN ZERO-EMISSION SCHOOL BUSES.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding **Senate Bill No. 92 – An Act Permitting Ten-Year Contractual Periods for the Transportation of School Children in Zero-Emission School Buses**. The purpose of this bill is to allow school districts to sign ten-year contracts with school bus operators for the retention of Zero-Emission Buses.

The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) **supports** this bill because it will lead to air quality benefits that protect some of the most at risk populations in the state - children. Mobile sources account for sixty-seven percent of NOx emissions in Connecticut.¹ Of that, heavy-duty vehicles (in which school buses are included) account for forty percent of emissions, the largest single source within the mobile source inventory, and are projected to account for as much as sixty-six percent of mobile source emissions of NOx by 2045.² Targeting school buses for electrification has the added benefit of decreasing emissions in neighborhoods, where residents are most impacted. The transition to zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) is critical for the state to meet air quality and climate goals. The Governor’s Council on Climate Change (GC3) recognized the importance of advancing adoption of ZEVs and included a recommendation in the latest GC3 report, *Taking Action on Climate Change*, to direct school district fleet managers and/or operations and finance directors to review their contracts with service providers and establish a plan for transitioning to electric school buses.³

Currently, the five-year limit for school bus contracts makes it difficult for school districts to apply to rebate programs such as the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) and the DEEP-administered Connecticut Volkswagen Mitigation grants to replace their old diesel vehicles with newer, cleaner electric vehicles. Allowing for ten-year contracts would also provide financial flexibility to spread out the costs over a longer contract term. Connecticut DEEP [recently awarded grants for 43 electric school buses](#), but this number could be higher, and reach more communities, if this statutory change is made. Extending the allowable contract period will not only ensure zero-emission buses stay in the state, but also allow more school districts and school bus operators to apply for these grant programs while they are available. This will become increasingly important as money from the Bipartisan

¹ <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Air/Mobile-Sources/Heavy-Duty-Vehicles>

² DEEP MOVES 2014b modeling

³ See Taking Action on Climate Change and Building a More Resilient Connecticut for All, recommendation # 22 p. 39

Infrastructure Law (BIL) starts moving through EPA's [Clean School Bus](#) program. The BIL allocated \$2.5 billion for zero-emission school buses, and will likely contain the same, if not stricter, retention policies for awarded buses. If Connecticut wants to take advantage of that once in a lifetime funding opportunity, this change needs to be made.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Harrison Nantz at Harrison.Nantz@ct.gov.